

**MANSFIELD DOWNTOWN PARTNERSHIP, INC.**  
**BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING**  
**Mansfield Downtown Partnership Office**  
**December 5, 2006**

**MINUTES**

Present: Stephen Bacon, Thomas Callahan, Dianne Doyle, Matt Hart, Al Hawkins, Janet Jones, Philip Lodewick, Dave Pepin, Steve Rogers, Phil Spak, Frank Vasington, David Woods

Staff: Cynthia van Zelm, Tricia Rogalski, Lee Cole-Chu

Guests: Tom Cody, Geoff Fitzgerald, Macon Toledano

**1. Call to Order**

Philip Lodewick called the meeting to order at 3:06 pm.

**2. Opportunity for Public to Comment**

There was no public comment.

**3. Approval of Minutes**

Tom Callahan made a motion to approve the minutes. Matt Hart seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

**4. Director's Report**

Cynthia van Zelm said that the Membership Development Committee has pursued the idea of answering phones for CPTV during women basketball games as a way to get more information out to people about the Storrs Center project. Neal Eskin from UConn Athletics gave her the go-ahead to pursue with CPTV staff. Ms. van Zelm asked the Board whether they would be willing to participate. Mr. Callahan said he thought between the Board and the Partnership committees, a group of people could participate. The Board gave Ms. van Zelm the go-head to pursue this. Mr. Callahan asked her to report back to the Board after she spoke to CPTV.

Ms. van Zelm said the pedestrian walkway outside Town Hall was almost complete and should be ready to open to more limited parking this week.

Ms. van Zelm reported that under Mayor Paterson's signature, a letter had been sent to Governor Rell about the Storrs Center project and the pending Urban

Action Grant at the State. Ms. van Zelm said more would be known about the status of the potential federal funding for the parking garage this winter.

Ms. van Zelm said the LeylandAlliance team would be updating the Conservation Commission at its next meeting in December on the storm water plan for the Storrs Center project.

**5. Review of DRAFT Strategic Planning Agenda**

Mr. Lodewick referred to the DRAFT Strategic Planning Agenda that was in the Board's packet. Should the Board pursue a strategic planning session? Mr. Lodewick, Mr. Hart, and Mr. Callahan said the timing is right to evaluate the next steps for the Partnership.

In terms of timing, Mr. Callahan said the objective was to conduct the session during a regular Board meeting time but it may be beneficial to switch the time to start at 3 pm. Steve Rogers agreed. Ms. van Zelm said it would be a working dinner.

Ms. van Zelm went over the strategic planning process and the draft agenda.

**6. Review of DRAFT Text and Map Amendments for Special Design District**

Tom Cody reiterated that the Leyland team, working in conjunction with the Partnership, is preparing the text of regulations to re-zone the Storrs Center property to a special design district.

Mr. Cody prepared to walk the Board through the draft map amendment that accompanies the text amendment. He said the team has been working with Planning Director Greg Padick and Town staff on the provisions for the new district.

The pieces that are part of the map amendment are 1) a 12-sheet plan set including maps, about the property i.e., plan of utilities, zoning, existing conditions, 2) a traffic study, 3) parking study, 4) storm water management plan, and 5) design guidelines.

The pre-application is being reviewed by Mr. Padick and Town staff. Ms. van Zelm said she has reviewed the package and provided comments to the Leyland team. Partnership attorney Lee Cole-Chu is reviewing the package as well. Leyland and the Partnership will be joint applicants.

The goal is to submit the application to the Planning and Zoning Commission by the end of December.

Mr. Cody proceeded to go over the plan set. Mr. Cole-Chu reminded everyone that the plans do not include the Dog Lane building as it has already been zoned to Plan Business 2.

Mr. Cody said the map amendment plan shows the four proposed zoning classifications (Mixed-Use, Residential, Conservation, and Existing Rural Residential (house on site, which will remain)).

The preliminary master plan map shows streets, buildings, parking, etc. Macon Toledano said the preliminary master plan has been updated to reflect the work that Urban Design Associates did and that was shown in their presentation to the Board in October. Mr. Cody said it captures the reconfigured town square, and the more open village street from the Post Office end of the project.

Mr. Lodewick asked if the Robarge property is located within the special design district boundary. It was noted that the zone for the Robarge property needs to be changed to reflect its current zoning as they are not part of the special design district. Mr. Cody and Mr. Toledano said any of the properties located within the Municipal Development Plan boundary (i.e., Robarge, Taylor, Haidous), could submit an application to the Planning and Zoning Commission to re-zone to the special design district, with their own set of design guidelines.

Mr. Cody said that a lot of time was spent studying storm water in the area. Geoff Fitzgerald explained that best management practices were being utilized. There will be underground detention. An acre of storage is needed for this type of development. There will be filtered basic detention areas. An adjacent stonewall will be constructed to assist with this process.

Mr. Fitzgerald explained that there is no storm water treatment now from the Post Office area.

Janet Jones asked how run-off is controlled from behind the current commercial buildings into the project area. Mr. Fitzgerald said the drainage will flow into the project area so will be treated by Leyland.

Dave Pepin asked if salt in the roads damages trees. Mr. Fitzgerald said the street trees being planned should be hardy and resistant to salt. Mr. Cody said many trees would be healthier with catch basins that will take sediments out of the water.

Mr. Cody said the traffic and storm water plans are for the entire project. Mr. Toledano said the Dr. Michael Klemmens has reviewed the storm water management plan. Mr. Cody that the team has had several meetings with the CT Department of Environmental Protection and they will need to approve the storm water management plan.

In response to a question from Dave Pepin about how the Planning and Zoning Commission (PZC) will digest the voluminous application, Mr. Cody said they will receive it in advance and the team will prepare a presentation using Power Point and other presentation materials.

Mr. Callahan asked Greg Padick (Mansfield Planning Director) to review the process. Mr. Padick said that after the PZC receives that application, they would refer it to Town committees such as the Conservation Commission. He expects there to be one to two months for comments. He said the Local Inland Wetlands Agency would also need to review the plans.

Mr. Cody referred to the traffic, parking, and transit maps. He said that most of the streets are planned to be public and will be turned over to the Town from the developer.

Frank Vasington asked if there was a connector from the Haidous property to the project. Mr. Toledano said there is a connector from the adjacent Taylor property.

Mr. Cody said potential transit stops are shown but implementation would need to be coordinated with UConn and the Windham Region Council of Governments whether they will want to utilize these stops.

Steve Bacon asked if the parking in the marketplace area was structured parking. Mr. Cody said it will not be a municipal garage and that it is proposed to be underground.

Phil Spak asked for an explanation of the lanes on Storrs Road. Mr. Fitzgerald said that there would be one lane north, and one lane south with a continued turning lane. There is also proposed to be a median in the center.

Mr. Cody said that several improvements were identified in the traffic study to improve traffic on Storrs Road including eliminating a light at the Dog Lane and Storrs Road intersection. The traffic study indicates that an acceptable Level of Service can be maintained as a result of the Storrs Center project.

Mr. Cody said the plan would need to be approved by the CT Dept. of Transportation (DOT) and its State Traffic Commission. The dialogue with DOT has begun.

Mr. Fitzgerald said the traffic study does not assume proposed roads from UConn campus to Route 44, and through to Route 275. CT DOT would not consider these plans until they are engineered and programmed for funding, in their analysis.

Mr. Fitzgerald said there are 20 to 25 parking spots proposed on Storrs Road. The parking spots would be parallel spots.

Mr. Callahan asked about any degradation to Level of Service in the area. Mr. Cody said they modeled the traffic growth even if the Storrs Center project does not happen. There are places where the Level of Service drops but there are no failing locations.

Mr. Cody explained that Level of Service is based on a scale from A to F. A "D" for traffic purposes still allows traffic to get through. An "F" means that a car cannot get through a light in one light cycle. Mr. Callahan clarified that it sounds like plans honor the concept of a main street and some slowing of traffic on Storrs Road should be expected but an acceptable level of service is maintained. Mr. Cody agreed.

Mr. Fitzgerald said there would be some areas on Storrs Road that will need to be widened but for the most case that will not occur. Mr. Toledano said that wide roads are not consistent with creating a pedestrian oriented development.

Mr. Cody said the parking study was conducted by Desman Associates who are nationally known for their work. The concept of shared use parking is a large part of the plan.

Parking is planned to be in two garages, on-street, and underground and is planned to handle the full build-out.

Mr. Toledano said the town parking consultant, Tighe and Bond, will need to review the parking study.

Mr. Vasington asked if people would be charged to park. Mr. Cody said this was the plan and that Desman will also be working on suggesting ways to manage the parking garages.

Mr. Lodewick asked if residents would have reserved spots in the garage. Mr. Toledano said he expects that one space will be reserved per residence.

Al Hawkins asked about the under grounding of utilities. Ms. van Zelm said that all utilities would be underground in the new area. The goal is to underground the utilities on Storrs Road adjacent to the project area but it depends on funding (included as request in Urban Action grant).

Mr. Bacon asked about the timing on improvements to Storrs Road. Mr. Toledano said that ideally they would like to focus on the town square first and adjacent improvements to Storrs Road. The goal would be to get all of Storrs Road done at once but it depends on funding.

Mr. Cody said a phasing plan was done to see how the project would proceed. The construction will work north to south. Phases will overlap.

Mr. Callahan asked what the latest numbers were on housing units. Mr. Toledano said the tentative numbers are 318 in Phase One, 154 in Phase 2, 101 in Phase 3, and 117 in Phase 4. Mr. Cody said that zoning will not address how many units are for sale vs. for rent. The current program calls for more for sale units than rental.

Mr. Cody said the last map shows access and location of loading and service areas. Mr. Toledano said these are not final and will be affected by building design.

Mr. Cody noted that the proposed design guidelines are done by district (neighborhood) area. Mr. Toledano reiterated that the Planning and Design Committee worked on these for the last year. It was determined that almost all the proposed guidelines could be regulated through zoning. The guidelines also incorporate some of the current guidelines already in the Town regulations. There is a checklist at the end that requires the architects to indicate whether their plans are consistent with the guidelines. This will be reviewed by the Director of Planning and the Partnership Planning and Design Committee.

Mr. Cody noted that the design guidelines do not specify the type of architecture to be used. The idea is to have a harmonious feeling with a variety of styles.

Mr. Toledano said the design guidelines are consistent with an internal pattern book that Leyland has put together.

Mr. Cody reiterated that the plan is for the PZC to approve the special design district followed by Inland Wetlands Authority approval. Site plans would then be prepared building by building (or area) for Town staff's review and approval. The Partnership Board then holds its public hearing and reports to the Planning Director whether the site plans are consistent with the new zoning. Once the site plan is approved, applications will go in for zoning permits and then building permits.

The Board discussed the timing of submittal of the application to the PZC. Mr. Cody asked if the Board would be able to submit an application on January 3 following its January 2 Board meeting. Mr. Padick said the PZC meets on January 2. Applications can only be received at a meeting. After some discussion, it was agreed that, if reviews are completed by Town staff, the Partnership and Leyland could submit the application with a final signature from the Partnership after its January 2 meeting.

Mr. Bacon suggested that the Planning and Design Committee could take action at its December meeting with a recommendation to the Board for Jan. 2.

Ms. van Zelm will follow-up with Board members not present to check their availability on the 2<sup>nd</sup>.

## **7. Approval of Partnership Meeting Calendar for 2007**

Mr. Callahan made a motion to approve the Board meeting agenda for 2007 with one change to indicate that the July meeting is on Tuesday, not a Wednesday (thanks to Ms. Jones' review). Mr. Hawkins seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

## **8. Report from Committees**

### Advertising and Promotion

Ms. Jones gave the report. Ms. Jones said the Winter Fun Day event is scheduled for Sunday, February 11<sup>th</sup> from 1 pm to 5 pm and will be held at the Community Center.

A ribbon cutting event for the pedestrian walkway has been discussed. The hope is to include the Leyland banner that was used at the Festival. The idea to show the connection would be to hold the ceremony at the start of the walkway near Storrs Road and then walk to the Community Center on the walkway. This could also serve as a celebration of approval of the special design district if it is approved by then.

With respect to signage on the Store 24 building, Ms. van Zelm received permission from Don Anderson at UConn to put signs in the vacant windows directing people to the Partnership office for more information about the project. Ms. Jones said she thought more needed to be done to improve the area. Betsy Paterson said that she and Ms. van Zelm would talk to someone at UConn.

Ms. Jones said the CD/Video is progressing well. She recognized Tricia Rogalski for all the work she is doing on it. President Austin, Mayor Paterson, Ms. van Zelm, and Dean Woods have all been interviewed.

Ms. Jones said that Ms. van Zelm, in consultation with the prospective partners (Town, UConn, and Leyland) determined that the Husky Dog project was too complicated and expensive at this time.

Ms. Jones said the Committee also reviewed the communications strategy for the Partnership, which is very comprehensive.

In January, the Committee will start working with Leyland on a signage plan.

### Festival on the Green

Ms. van Zelm said the Committee had a debrief meeting at Mayor Paterson's. The Committee was very pleased with the event. She said changing the parade route so it does not get backed up was one of the suggestions.

Ms. Jones said in the third year, everything really came together!

### Membership Development

Ms. van Zelm gave the report in Chair Betsy Treiber's absence. She said 2<sup>nd</sup> notices on renewals had gone out this week and follow-up calls by the Committee would occur after the holidays.

## **9. Adjourn**

Mr. Callahan made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Pepin seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 5:12 pm.

*Meeting notes taken by Cynthia van Zelm.*